

## Facilitator Resource 3.2: The Story of Ethan and Kelly

Read the following aloud. Stop and check for understanding when needed. Guide and assist as necessary.

### Part 1: Ethan's Story

Child welfare was part of Ethan's life since he was a baby.

When he was four years old, he and his brother were removed from his family and placed in foster care. A year later Ethan was placed in a potential adoptive home, but the placement broke down after four months.

Two more placements followed which also did not work out, and so at the age of six Ethan was placed in a specialized foster home that could support many of his behavioural challenges.

Throughout Ethan's time in care Children's Aid Society staff believed that family options for Ethan had been exhausted.

The kin worker who undertook the initial search assessed that Ethan didn't have any connections to his family and that Ethan also felt he didn't have any family outside of his foster home.

It took many years, and the support of Ethan's children services worker and foster family, for the Children's Aid Society kin finder to locate Ethan's extended family, including his maternal grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

The family had not known that Ethan was in foster care. All the family members wanted to meet Ethan, so visits were arranged, including with his paternal aunt, Kelly.

Kelly made an effort to spend time to get to know Ethan and to let him know that he had family to love him. With planning and support, Ethan moved in with her. Kelly subsequently obtained custody of Ethan.

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### Part 2: Kelly's Letter

**A year later, Kelly provided this update to the Children's Aid Society team:**

Good day ladies it's Kelly & Ethan

It's been over a year and we have made incredible progress and I thought it was only right to share with all of you, with hopes you will understand our gratitude and appreciation is beyond words.

Let's talk about Ethan, it may help refresh some memories .....and see how YOU have made a difference. Ethan came to me with bad report cards, anger issues, being expelled repeatedly throwing chairs just sheer outrage which is to be expected with his lifestyle but what a turn around. I could see the progress in his report cards but this last one really gave me the incentive to sit and email all of you who had part in making this happen.

To refresh your memory, Ethan was mad at the world and it was quite apparent in his behavior in school, the calls to come get him as he had been violent towards others was jeopardizing my work ... I had to take a leave with no income as the government does not support kin placement if you are family and don't require adoption...

We made it through no income, but I had no choice but to go back to work in January ... by this time Ethan and I actually grew to know each other as did the love and we are one now. Ethan's behavior was changing, and I was not getting calls from the school and when I did it was not a suspension.

Months later I started dating someone and after time of making sure it was right I introduced Ethan to my new love. Now, the two of them are so close and he is such a great role model for Ethan. Even Ethan's teacher could see the difference. Ethan is now learning how to build, taking an engine apart and put it back together. With his vision issues, this is a huge asset for his future. Ethan is being taught how to respect others and his confidence is improved big time. The whole family has noticed a change in Ethan.

We see Skylar his brother on a regular basis as well. We also have had him in Martial Arts for three months or so; the boys go together and that is their time. We had a meeting at the school about a month ago and I'm so pleased to announce Ethan has been taken off sensory issues and is now considered normal tempered child. His teachers from this year and last stopped me to say that they are so impressed with Ethan's changes. Positive efforts and effects that having a place in the world can make such a difference educationally. I commend them on their part in all this but as they both said to me: 'it's been a team effort by all'. That includes all of you LADIES!!

Ethan knows he is LOVED by two parents and many family members and is an extremely happy boy. THANK YOU again for all your help and I hope this warms your heart and gives you a great feeling of accomplishment or worth!!

\* Names changed for anonymity

Adapted from: <http://www.oacas.org/2021/09/we-are-one-now-a-kin-caregivers-letter-to-a-childrens-aid-society-one-year-after-bringing-her-nephew-home/>